

Message Text

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P 051838Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3025
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 00149

USEEC AND USOECD ALSO FOR AMEMBASSIES

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: MORE ON LABOR PLANT ELECTIONS

REF: MADRID 10141-77 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME SLIPPAGE TO
ALLOW FOR THE MINIMUM 20-DAY CAMPAIGN PERIOD, THE
JANUARY 16 - FEBRUARY 6 TIMEFRAME FOR LABOR PLANT
ELECTIONS HAS BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTED. ALTHOUGH THE
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GOVT CONSIDERS THESE ELECTIONS AS ONLY "PARTIAL" AND
"PROVISIONAL", THE UNIONS ARE PUSHING TO MAKE THEM
AS EXTENSIVE AS POSSIBLE AND HOPE THAT AT LEAST HALF OF
SPAIN'S ESTIMATED 8 MILLION PLUS WAGE-EARNING WORKERS
WILL BE CASTING THEIR BALLOTS. THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN
IS GETTING INTO HIGH GEAR, WITH POLITICAL PARTY - TRADE
UNION LINKS BECOMING INCREASINGLY APPARENT. THE UGT

CURRENTLY EXPECTS TO SPEND CLOSE TO US \$1 MILLION, AND ASSERTS THAT THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED SWC IS CURRENTLY SPENDING AT A RATE OF 4 TO 1 COMPARED TO THEMSELVES. IT IS UNCLEAR AT THIS WRITING WHAT THE MAGNITUDE OF THE VOTE MIGHT BE. IT IS ALSO PROBABLE THAT THE RESULTS WILL NOT SETTLE THE QUESTION OF "WHO IS NUMBER ONE" IN THE SPANISH TRADE UNION FIELD. END SUMMARY.

2. THE JANUARY 16 - FEBRUARY 6 TIMEFRAME FOR THE LABOR PLANT ELECTIONS PROPOSED BY THE SOCIALIST UGT AND THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS (SWC) (REFTEL) HAS BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY ALL CONCERNED (I.E. UNIONS, EMPLOYERS, AND GOVT), ALTHOUGH THERE WILL BE SOME SLIPPAGE IN SOME PROVINCES TO ALLOW FOR THE MINIMUM 20-DAY CAMPAIGN PERIOD. SPECIFIC DATES WILL CHANGE FROM PROVINCE TO PROVINCE, WITH THE TIMING IN THE HEAVILY INDUSTRIALIZED SECTORS, FOR EXAMPLE, VARYING BETWEEN THE BASQUE PROVINCE OF VIZCAYA (JAN 16 - FEB 22), MADRID (JAN 22 TO 29), AND CATALUNYA (JAN 30 TO FEB 6).

3. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR JUST HOW MANY OF SPAIN'S ESTIMATED 8 MILLION PLUS WAGE-EARNING WORKERS WILL ACTUALLY BE GOING TO THE POLLS. THE GOVT CONSIDERS THESE PLANT ELECTIONS AS ONLY "PARTIAL" ELECTIONS, TO BE HELD UNDER A "PROVISIONAL AND TRANSITIONAL SYSTEM" PENDING CORTES (PARLIAMENT) ACTION ON A DEFINITIVE PLANT ELECTION LAW. THUS, REASONS THE GOVT, THERE SHOULD ONLY BE ELECTIONS AT SELECTED PLANTS WHERE PLANT

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REPRESENTATIVES ARE NEEDED URGENTLY AND EITHER DO NOT EXIST OR CLEARLY NEED TO BE REPLACED. AS CAN BE SEEN, THIS CRITERION LEAVES CONSIDERABLE ROOM FOR INTERPRETATION. FOR THEIR PART, THE UNIONS ARE PUSHING TO MAKE THE ELECTIONS AS EXTENSIVE AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO "CLARIFY THE TRADE UNION SITUATION", AND THE UGT HAS TOLD US THAT IT IS HOPEFUL THAT SOME 4 TO 5 MILLION WORKERS WILL IN FACT CAST THEIR BALLOTS. IN ANY EVENT, THE ELECTION DECREE-LAW (MADRID 9825) WILL COVER SEGMENTS OF PRIVATE, PUBLIC, INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND SERVICE-ORIENTED FIRMS. IT DOES NOT COVER MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS, GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, OR FARM WORKERS.

4. WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE CHRISTMAS - NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS, THE PLANT ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS GETTING INTO HIGH GEAR. NEITHER UNIONS NOR POLITICAL PARTIES ARE DISREGARDING THE OBVIOUS POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE FIRST FREE LABOR ELECTIONS - EVEN THOUGH PARTIAL - IN FORTY YEARS. THE POLITICAL - TRADE UNION LINKS OF THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT ARE OBVIOUSLY THE MOST APPARENT. THUS THE COMMUNISTS (PCE) ARE GOING ALL OUT FOR THE SWC, THE SOCIALISTS (PSOE) ARE HOPING THAT THEIR EARLIER STRONG LEGISLATIVE ELECTION APPEAL WILL RUB OFF ON THE UGT, AND

THE SMALLER PSP OF TIerno GALVAN IS FAVORING THE SWC AND
USO (THE ANTI-MERGER ZAGUIRRE ELEMENT). THE EXTRA-
PARLIAMENTARY EXTREME LEFT FRINGE GROUPS PTE AND ORT ARE
SUPPORTING THE "UNITARY" CSUT AND SU RESPECTIVELY.
THE UCD GOVT PARTY OF THE CENTER, ALTHOUGH IT HAS MADE
NO OFFICIAL DECLARATION, CAN BE EXPECTED TO SUPPORT
"INDEPENDENT" LISTS OR CANDIDATES IN HOPES OF BLUNTING
SOCIALIST - COMMUNIST SUCCESSES WHICH WOULD BE BOUND TO
HAVE POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS DETRIMENTAL TO THE UCD IN
THE COMING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. ON THE RIGHT, AP HAS
EXPRESSED ITS DESIRE TO "SEPARATE POLITICS FROM INTEREST
GROUPS", AND WILL THUS GIVE NO PARTICULAR GUIDANCE TO ITS
MILITANTS -- EXCEPT TO POINT OUT THE DESIRABILITY OF
"APOLITICAL AND INDEPENDENT UNIONS" (*) THE BASQUE PNV
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IS KNOWN TO FAVOR THE BASQUE STV FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MADRID 00149

USEEC AND USOECD ALSO FOR AMEMBASSIES

AS REPORTED EARLIER, THE ANARCHO-SYNDICAL CNT IS OFFICIALLY BOYCOTTING THE ELECTIONS. THE EMPLOYERS HAVE HAD LITTLE TO SAY PUBLICLY, ALTHOUGH THE LARGE CEOE (SPANISH CONFEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS ORGANIZATIONS) UMBRELLA GROUP HAS UNDERLINED THE PARTIAL AND PROVISIONAL NATURE OF THE ELECTIONS, RECOMMENDING "STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE DECREE" WITH RESPECT TO CONVENING SUCH ELECTIONS.

5. DURING THE COURSE OF A WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION WITH LABATT ON JANUARY 4, UGT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY MANUEL SIMON COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS ON THE PLANT ELECTIONS.
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MEETING WITH LABMIN JIMENEZ DE PARGA. IN RECENT MEETING BETWEEN LABOR MINISTER AND UGT SECGEN REDONDO AND SWC SECGEN CAMACHO, THE FORMER HAD REJECTED (A) IDEA OF ONE SPECIFIC SINGLE DATE FOR THE ELECTIONS (UGT PROPOSAL), (B) ELECTIONS IN ALL PLANTS ("LET THE WORKERS DECIDE", JIMENEZ DE PARGA SAID), AND (C) ACCESS TO TV PUBLICITY. UGT CAMPAIGN EFFORTS. JANUARY 4 JOINT MEETING OF UGT AND PSOE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES TO DISCUSS CAMPAIGN STRATEGY HAD AGREED ON FOLLOWING: (A) PSOE SECGEN FELIPE GONZALEZ WOULD UNDERTAKE 5 OR 6 SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS TO WORKERS IN CRITICAL LOCATIONS SUCH AS VALENCIA (LOCATION OF FORD PLANT), VIGO (CITROEN PLANT), BARCELONA (SEAT PLANT), AND BILBAO (ALTOS HORNOS); (B) GONZALEZ WOULD ALSO ACCEPT HALF DOZEN OR SO PENDING REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS BY LEADING WEEKLY MAGAZINES, AND WOULD MAKE LABOR ISSUES THE MAJOR THEME; (C) 20 PSOE DEPUTIES WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO WORK FULLTIME ON THE CAMPAIGN, TO SUPPLEMENT THE "10 UGT DEPUTIES"; (D) THE FACILITIES OF THE PSOE PARTY MACHINERY WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE UGT; AND (E) GONZALEZ WOULD TRY TO SECURE SOME TV ADVERTISING SLOTS FOR AN "INDIRECT" UGT ELECTORAL PITCH.

6. CAMPAIGN FUNDING. DESPITE THE FACT THAT DGB 10 MILLION DM LOAN HAD NOW BEEN SIGNED AND SEALED (SEE MADRID 9885 - NOTAL), SPANISH GOVT RED TAPE WAS CONTINUING TO HOLD UP FINAL DELIVERY ALTHOUGH THE WEST GERMANS WERE READY TO PROVIDE THE FUNDS AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. NEVERTHELESS, ON THE BASIS OF THE COMING DGB LOAN, THE UGT HAD SECURED AN ADVANCE CREDIT OF 20 TO 30 MILLION PTAS (\$250,000 TO \$375,000) FOR CAMPAIGN EXPENSES. IN ADDITION, WESTERN EUROPEAN UNIONS (HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE SCANDINAVIANS) AND THE ICFTU WERE CON-

TRIBUTING SOME 40 MILLION PTAS (\$500,000) FOR THE CAMPAIGN.
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THE 8 MILLION PTAS (\$100,000) ICFTU CONTRIBUTION REPRESENTED AN ADVANCE OF ITS 1978 COMMITMENT TO THE UGT. CAMPAIGN COSTS WERE HIGH, SAID SIMON, NOTING THAT THE TAB FOR 1 MILLION POSTERS ALONE WOULD COME TO 4 OR 5 MILLION PTAS. IF AS THEY HOPED, THE UGT COULD INDIRECTLY OBTAIN 13 TV SPOTS THROUGH THE WEEKLY PSOE-LINING MAGAZINE CUADERNOS PARA EL DIALOGO, THAT WOULD RUN ANOTHER 6 MILLION PTAS (\$75,000). THE UGT ESTIMATED THAT THE SWC WERE SPENDING "4 TIMES AS MUCH" ON THEIR CAMPAIGN, AND WERE RECEIVING FUNDS FROM ITALY (CGIL), FRANCE (CGT), EAST GERMANY, YUGOSLAVIA AND OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS, IN ADDITION TO WFTU FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

7. COMMENT. AS SUGGESTED ABOVE, IT IS UNCLEAR AT THIS WRITING WHAT THE MAGNITUDE OF THE VOTE MIGHT BE. IT DOES APPEAR QUITE EVIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT THE TRADE UNIONS - ESPECIALLY THE "BIG TWO" - ARE MAKING AN ALL-OUT EFFORT DESPITE THE SUPPOSED PROVISIONAL NATURE OF THE ELECTIONS. IT IS ALSO PROBABLE THAT THE RESULTS, BASED ON SUCH A PARTIAL ELECTION, WILL NOT SETTLE THE QUESTION AS TO "WHO IS NUMBER ONE" IN THE TRADE UNION FIELD. AS A MATTER OF FACT, MANY OF THE UNIONS COULD DECLARE THEMSELVES "WINNERS" DEPENDING UPON THEIR PARTICULAR CRITERIA. SHOULD EITHER THE UGT OR THE SWC, HOWEVER, EMERGE WITH A LOPSIDED VICTORY (WHICH DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY), THE LOSER WOULD HAVE LOST AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL BATTLE. THUS, THE UGT IS RUNNING SCARED IN THE BELIEF THAT GOVT DELAYING TACTICS WITH RESPECT TO THE PLANT ELECTIONS HAVE HELPED THE COMMUNISTS AND THE SWC PICK UP STEAM. THE UGT IS CONCERNED THAT GIVEN THE COMPARATIVELY LONG LAPSE BETWEEN THE JUNE 1977

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 MADRID 00149

USEEC AND USOECD ALSO FOR EMBASSIES

LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS AND THESE PLANT ELECTIONS, THE
PSOE ELECTORAL MAGIC MAY NO LONGER BE EASILY TRANSFERRED
TO THE UGT. EATON

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Message Attributes

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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MORE ON LABOR PLANT ELECTIONS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP
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Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c4d28be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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